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IS THE PLAGUE CONTAGIOUS?

[Continued from page 334.]

We have finished with the historical account of the plague as it occurred at Malta and Goso, and shall now consider this disease as it has shown itself in various other places, and at different periods. We have had reference to various publications, and have taken such extracts from each, as might serve to show whether this pestilence could be deemed contagious.

Monsieur Samoilowitz, a Russian, who wrote on this complaint in 1783, states that the infection cannot be communicated by the air, but by contact alone. Sonnini, an Italian author of some note, says, that to establish the fact that the plague can be communicated by contact alone, he would cite an instance which came within his knowledge, of a garment having been so completely impregnated with pestilential matter, as to transmit the plague to those who touched it, while the person who carried it altogether escaped. This writer also mentions that the shocking mortality which was caused by this disease at Constantinople, in 1778, when two thousand died in a day, was wholly attributable to the neglect and indifference of the Turks, who did not employ any means for their preservation. Sonnini believed that no remedy had been discovered, and that it was both difficult and dangerous to make any suggestions for a disease which spreads itself with such certain and dreadful rapidity. He cites an instance of a Russian surgeon, who, when confined as a prisoner at Constantinople, with many of his countrymen, recommended inoculation, and in this way killed upwards of two hundred persons. He lastly inoculated himself and died, which this writer thinks a fortunate circumstance, as had he lived, not one would have been spared; as it was, a few at least escaped.

How different is this from the statement of that distinguished French physician, Clot Bey, who is now at the head of the Medical Board of Egypt. He declares that all quarantines for this complaint are humbugs; that he has twice inoculated himself with matter from diseased patients, and that his home has been for years in plague hospitals. We shall await the publication of his work with much anxiety; from his rank, practice, talent and influence, his statements will be deserving of the utmost attention. We might say the same of Dr. Bowring, who has published a pamphlet on this subject, and is of the same opinion as Clot Bey, that the plague is not contagious, and that the quarantines, as

now conducted, are wholly useless. Dr. Bowring is at present employed by the British government to make himself acquainted with the nature of this malady, and is to be sent to the Congress to which we have previously alluded. Dr. Tainsh, who was the surgeon on board the English line of battle ship "Theseus," at the siege of St. Jean D'Acre, had several cases on board under his treatment, and did not lose a single patient. It was his opinion that this disease was not so contagious as generally thought, and that the reason it so much prevailed in the Levant was because the Mahommedans were so careless, indifferent and indolent, when the complaint existed among them. Sir James Porter, in his work on Turkey, has made a singular assertion; he says "that there is not on record, nor has a single living witness related, an instance of an English factor or servant dying of the plague at any of the sea ports, towns, or in any other part of Syria, or Asia Minor, and but one only in Constantinople, in almost a century; and that from the first origin of the charter not one English seaman had ever died with the plague." George Baldwin, Esq., who was for several years the English Consul in Egypt, and who is supposed to have been the first who ever recommended the use of oil, where persons were afflicted with this disease, has stated that out of one million of the inhabitants who perished by this malady in four years, he could not discover a single oil-man, or dealer in oil.

Dr. McLean, of Calcutta, published in 1801 a work on the plague, to prove that it was not contagious; his arguments were thought to be of too trifling a nature to require an answer, and those who noticed the book at all, did it only to vent their spleen, and call its author a madman. We will take a quotation from the doctor's work, as his opinions are becoming daily more popular, and have already found several able advocates. Dr. McLean argues that contagion cannot exist, from the fact that if it did, consequences would result which never do take place; that is, that all who were exposed would become infected. And more particularly would this argument be true of the Turks, who use no exertions to prevent contagion, and where, as a natural consequence, the malady would never cease, until the whole population was destroyed. Our author observes that it appeared to him "that this contagion, or principle of plague, is diffusible in the atmosphere, to a distance greater or less from an infected body, according to the climate and season of the year, and possibly to other peculiar states of the atmosphere, with which we are unacquainted; that in the spring or summer, a single infected person will be found sufficient to contaminate the air of a whole city, and that it will increase in strength and influence until it becomes so powerful that nothing but the winter season will put a stop to it."

This statement does not accord with that of Dr. Deidier, who asks, if this disease is in the air, how it happened that the inmates of a convent which was situated between the pest hospital, on one side, and the grave yard where those who died with the plague were buried, on the other, could possibly escape. Yet this did occur at Marseilles, and not a single inmate was seized with the disease during the whole period it remained in the city. Muratoris has published that when the plague

was last in England, while it raged in the town of Cambridge, the collegians altogether avoided it by having no communication with the town's people. Gastoldi has stated that when this malady was in Rome in 1656-7, the inmates of the monasteries and nunneries escaped, who kept themselves confined. Bertholett could not discover any change in the atmosphere, during the existence of the plague. Diermerbroeck, an author of high repute, was of the same opinion, as was Dr. Tully, from whose work we have taken these references. Raymond "supposed that the infected might be conversed with, without danger, at a few paces distance." They stated that the infection extended only a few paces, and that the miasms, at a distance of twelve yards, were so corrected by the air as to lose all their activity. A Jew, a physician of some note, was of opinion that the air about poor patients was more infectious than that about the rich. This reminds us of the statement of Lord Clarendon, who at the time the plague was in England, was filling a diplomatic situation abroad. On his return to London, finding all his friends and relations well around him, he remarked that the disease must have been of a vulgar nature, as none but the poor had perished. Whether the climate has any influence on the disease is, like everything else connected with it, a matter of uncertainty.

We think it unnecessary to give any more authorities, as no two travellers or physicians who have written on the subject, appear to agree in their statements. Some are of opinion that it is in spring that the plague is most deadly; others, again, that it is summer; a few have declared in the fall; and one mentions an instance, where, in the dead of winter, with four feet of snow on the ground, it swept off half the inhabitants of a populous town. Traditions on this subject are worthy of some attention, more particularly when they have passed down several centuries, and are firmly believed by the natives of plague countries; but while speaking of this disease, we would not recommend too much credence to be given to traditions, as at the best they are but doubtful authorities, and by trusting them too much, the public health might suffer. When we resided at Smyrna, the *pest* made its appearance several times among the people, and in every instance where it was traced from Constantinople, little or no attention was paid to it, as it generally terminated with those who brought it; but when the inhabitants were told it came from Syria or Egypt, they became much alarmed—the doors were closed, the houses cleansed, the food passed through water, all papers smoked, and all intercourse avoided. From this, it would appear that the Smyrnaotes, among whom this disease occurs so frequently, that hardly a year transpires without some "*accidents*," entertain an idea that when the *pest* comes from the north, it is not contagious; when from the south, it is. They also believe that when the contagion makes its appearance in spring, it will be destroyed by the heats of summer; when it commences in the fall, they anxiously look for the earliest frosts to put an end to its ravages. In all the instances which have come to our knowledge personally, these statements have proved correct. Well do we remember having once been confined for five and thirty days at our lodgings in Smyrna, and when this period

was past, which was to us full of apprehension and suffering, fearing that by the negligence of our servants, by contact with a cat, or by our own inattention, the plague might be introduced in our dwelling, with what pleasure we hailed the approach of the festa of St. John, on the twenty-fourth of June. On the morning of that day all the windows were thrown up, all the houses opened for the reception of visitors, and all the Frank residents of the city were dressed in their best, and hastening to the Catholic churches to return thanks for their preservation. Seeing our neighbors lay aside all fear, we did the same, and when in the street we followed the crowd till it reached the entrance of the Austrian chapel, which was beautifully dressed in crimson damask, and lighted with silver lamps. When at the door we hesitated to enter; we feared that some one in the dense crowd before us might be clothed in the garments of death, and that those who were so anxiously striving to go in, to seek eternal life, might but be hastening to become the tenants of a tomb. Our fears overcame our wishes, so we turned and left—but as we went, we were told by an aged man, whom we judged had seen some seventy summers, not to fear, but to enter in and pray—that it was a festa day, and that St. John would ask of the Lord not to smite his chosen people. When he observed that we did not put so much faith in the Saint as many appeared to do, who were offering to the image their golden ornaments, were weeping, kneeling and praying, he remarked—"you, indeed, are heretics, and your fate will be like that of the Jews and infidels, who, you see, are groping their way in darkness around you." As this last remark was not at all of a persuasive nature, we left the old man and returned to our lodgings, with a hope that we should not suffer from his prediction, or from our exposure. We must do the Smyrnaotes the justice to say, that after the festa was past, the weather gradually became warmer, the violent symptoms of the plague disappeared, and in the course of a few days not a case of the disease was known to exist, either in the city or its suburbs. Should this sign of theirs ever fail, the consequences would be dreadful—the pest would be introduced into every dwelling, and every family might suffer by its ravages.

In taking leave of this subject for the present, we would recommend to the Smyrnaotes not to have so much confidence in their Saint, as he may deceive them; and when it is too late, they may be made aware of their error, and perish.

[To be continued.]

LETTER ON THE PARIS ACADEMY OF MEDICINE.

[Translated from a Paris Medical Periodical, and communicated for this Journal.]

THE Academy of Medicine has no better friends than ourselves. We not only praise it, but blame and criticise it as occasion requires. This is the part of true friendship; *qui bene amat bene castigat*. The Academy is powerful; it has consequently many flatterers and courtiers, who find everything, that it says and does, right. It is desirable that

some one should speak the truth, although, as it generally happens, it should take it in bad part.

One of its worst habits is that of not knowing how to employ its time. Of the two hours devoted to its session, it employs nearly one half in the communication of parts of its correspondence, and in the reading of a sham verbal process that an excess of zeal has foolishly transformed into a veritable full account. The verbal processes of Cuvier at the Academy of Sciences never lasted longer than five minutes. Those of the Academy of Medicine often continue more than a quarter of an hour. As to the other half of the time, it is rare that it is not absorbed by discussions entirely or almost idle; we say idle, because they bear neither upon points of science, nor upon practical facts, but have for their object either personal disputes, or the details of forms which the Academy ought to leave to the decision of its council. Genuine scientific conferences are very rare. What can be more useless than the interminable conversations which follow the reading of reports upon secret remedies, or upon some similar branch of academical labors, conversations generally without end, which the benevolence of the presidents allow to run at random without rule and without law! The presidents of our Academy are too apt to forget that they are in the chair not only to preside, but to govern. We must have liberty, but not anarchy; and it is not admissible that the liberty of speaking, or rather of prattling, should be the same in an academy as in a drawing room. These frivolous conversations run away with at least a third part of each session, and this time might be much better employed. How many important labors wait in vain for their turn to be presented, for months and even years! One would think that the admission of the public to the academical assemblies would be a favorable stimulant; but it seems to have had no other effect than to bring a love of noise and a desire of showing off, and to drive away those serious scientific habits, which require silence and a collected mind. The Academy of Medicine has become in this way, like many others, a stage where one goes to perform and be seen. This is not at all the spirit of these institutions. But this question is too serious a one to be touched upon cursorily. We shall only note this circumstance as one of the causes which provoke and maintain in the bosom of the Academy passions and interests which, to satisfy, takes away a great deal of time from scientific operations.

But this is not all. Our Academy not only expends nearly three fourths of its time in useless discussions and occupations, but loses the remainder in consequence of a habit not less blameable. This habit, which is particularly surprising to our provincial brethren who are introduced for the first time into the sanctuary of the Rue de Poitiers, is that of not listening. It is indeed entirely characteristic. It is only in the Chamber of Deputies that some distant analogy may be found. In other literary meetings, similar to those of the Institute, nothing like it is seen. We confess that in a great majority of cases what is said does not deserve to be heard. Inattention is then admissible, but not interruption. Silence, but not attention, is demanded. Be as weary as you please, it is the right of an academician; but be weary in a grave and peaceable

manner. You are not asked to listen; this would be a piece of revolting injustice; but simply to allow others to hear. You may yawn, sleep, read your journal, make your notes; all this is lawful. This is practised in well-behaved academies. With us, noise is not an occasional occurrence, it is the normal state; and the bell of the president, which, in other academies, sounds but once, at the opening of the session, is in ours a sort of running accompaniment. On this account it does not obtain the slightest attention. It is only an additional sound in this mighty hubbub. It may be said that, excepting some rare cases, all the readings at the Academy are heard only by the reader. There is great inconvenience in this state of things. The person who occupies the tribune alone has the right to speak—his being there gives him that right. Silence is a still more imperative duty if the person who speaks is a stranger to the Academy; a warm welcome ought to be accorded to those who are freely admitted; and to fail in this is inexcusable ill manners.

The tone, the direction, the taste of the discussions are not less eccentric. Cries, shouts, interruptions, form their material and make the web. Heaven is our witness that we do not calumniate this our honorable Academy; it is a known fact that it is impossible to discuss there gravely, moderately, politely and regularly, at least on ordinary occasions. The exceptions are too rare to be quoted. A few days since, the body, in secret session, was so stormy that *they say* nothing like it was ever known in the memory of academicians; but, if they say this, it must be because the memories of academicians are peculiarly short, for nothing is more common than these events. At any rate, it appears that on this occasion, they went all lengths in words, and that the thing was stopped just as they were coming to blows.

Concerning the internal affairs of the Academy, its budget, its bulletin, and other details of finance and administration, we have nothing to say on the ground of discussion. But we groan at the exhibition which our honorable brethren make of themselves to each other.

In a word, what is especially wanting in the external affairs of our Academy, is a cool, dignified deportment. How is it possible to make others respect us, when we seem unwilling to respect ourselves? What authority will an academical decision have, when announced at the same moment with epigrams, puns, and shouts of laughter? How does our profession dare to pretend, among others, to the good opinion of the people, when the élite of the physicians of the capital show themselves thus in dishabille in public? how to speak of medicine as a sort of priesthood, when the priests are seen to abandon themselves to extravagances incompatible with decency, good taste, and the habits of good society.

We have left off the gown and sugar-loaf hat, and fancy that we have gained much in losing these absurdities; but we suspect that this gown and cap were not so vain and useless as is generally imagined. This costume protected, without doubt, the emptiness of some ignorant persons, and the insolence of various quacks; but, in general, the class of men who wore them were more grave, more circumspect, more reserved,

than that which has succeeded it; for from making itself respected by its costume, it made the costume respected by its manners.

TEMPERANCE AND EXCESS.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—In my last, I represented our farmers in New England, beyond middle age, notwithstanding all that is said about their health, to be almost universally affected with liver complaints, stomach or bowel complaints, or rheumatism; and I insisted that these diseases were caused, to a very great extent, by excess of food.

One thing, at any rate, is certain, and it cannot have escaped the observation of any observing medical man, which is that these diseases prevail; and that it is so common to find them coupled with age everywhere, that they are regarded, by most people, as its infirmities. Many would smile at the idea that these infirmities of age, as they are gravely regarded, are often little more than the natural consequences of their dietetic errors. Yet what can be more certain?

But "the appetite," says your correspondent, "is a safe and competent guide. With nothing but plain fare, and substantial dishes, such as are found among our hardy yeomanry, there is no danger of healthy men killing themselves."

Let us see how this is. The military rations, in England, are a pound of bread and a pound of beef or mutton daily. In France they are a pound and six ounces of bread, and 8½ ounces of butcher's meat. Nor should it be forgotten how often it is that even this small allowance of meat includes a large amount of mere bone. To these substantials, however, they add, when they can get them for themselves, various other articles; but when nothing else can be had, this is supposed to be amply sufficient to maintain health and strength. What the rations of American soldiers are, I do not now recollect, but I believe they do not essentially differ from the above.

The miners and forgers, in Dudley, England, are allowed a daily average of 18 ounces of bread, 7 of potatoes, 4 of meat, bacon or cheese, and 2 of oatmeal; amounting, of course, to 31 ounces of food. The 2 ounces of oatmeal is also frequently made into gruel.

Capt. Parry's men, in an excursion near the north pole, of two months' duration, had a daily allowance of 10 ounces of biscuit, 9 ounces of meat, and 1 ounce of cocoa powder; and there is no evidence that this was an insufficient supply of food, notwithstanding the extreme cold, and their exceedingly hard labor.

I might present, here, an account of the diet of workshops, penitentiaries, &c.; but to this there would be two objections brought; one that it is unreasonable to think of restricting people in health to prisoners' fare, and the other that prisoners usually need less food than other people, because they use less exercise. I will therefore content myself with adding, that many a person—to say nothing of such cases as that of Lewis Cornaro—has been well sustained, and that, too, for a con-

siderable time, and at hard manual labor, on from twelve to twenty-four ounces of solid food, and four ounces of milk, a day; nor do the best writers on this subject believe, that to secure the best health, in these circumstances, more than from one pound to one pound and a half of solid food, such as good dry bread, plain meat, &c., with, perhaps, four ounces of milk or eight of gruel, is desirable or even admissible. It is difficult, I know, to fix on any quantity which shall be exactly adapted to the circumstances and habits of all; but I am fully assured that no soldier, sailor, farmer, or other hard laborer in the open air, can be found who has suffered any inconvenience, so far as health is concerned, merely for the want of food, when he has received his regular rations of two pounds, or nearly two pounds, of solid food a day. We may therefore set this down as the maximum amount of food, per day, which is compatible with the best health. What the minimum is—in other words, what is the least quantity, say of plain meat and bread, or of plain bread alone, on which a person can be sustained in the best permanent health—has not, I believe, been well ascertained; because mankind are more concerned to eat as much as they can and not suffer, than as little as they can. I should not be greatly surprised to find, hereafter, should any fair experiments be made, that a quantity of solid food, as good bread, not much exceeding one pound a day, is better than a larger quantity, provided we are trained right, or having been trained wrong, can muster resolution and perseverance enough to reform ourselves. Not, of course, one pound of potatoes, or apples, or milk, or gruel; for if the nutriment is less than in bread, the quantity must be increased.*

But admitting two pounds of solid food—the maximum—to be admissible, and all beyond that to be excess, how stands the case with our New England farmers? "The appetite," says your correspondent, "with them, is a safe and competent guide." Does he know whither this appetite—this safe and competent guide—sometimes leads? I know he has had opportunities for observation; but has he had his eyes open? Does he know what enormous quantities of food are often swallowed—I will not say eaten, but swallowed, bolted at least—by our hearty farmers, as they are called, in twenty-four hours? Does he not know that where they have an abundance at all times—and such an abundance they generally have—especially in the winter, and at other seasons and times when their work does not "drive" them, they actually swallow double, nay even quadruple the quantity of food, in one form or another, which has been set down above as the maximum?

I have made some estimates, based on observation and experience, in regard to this subject; and I find that the family of a New-England farmer, or other laborer, consisting, as families do, upon the average, of about five persons each, often consumes 33 pounds of food a day; and that, too, under the direction of that guide which your correspondent has pronounced safe and competent.

* I do not forget here, what every medical man well knows, that a person who has been exceedingly reduced by disease, will recover after the disease has left him, on the use of a much smaller quantity of food than is here named, say on ten ounces of bread in twenty-four hours, or a pint of milk, or two pints of gruel. But it should be remembered that here there is very little waste, so that the system, though debilitated greatly, does not require as much sustenance as that of the hard laborer.

Is such a conclusion startling? It is so to myself; and yet when I consider the facts from which it is deduced, I cannot come to any other. Indeed, I am sure it is quite within bounds. The potatoes and the milk used (allowing little more than a pint of the latter to each individual upon the average, and many families eat and drink a quart each, besides what they put into bread, pudding, cakes, tea and coffee) would of themselves often weigh fifteen pounds. Then there are the meat, the fish, the turnips, the bread, the cake, the hasty pudding, the butter, the cheese, the apples, the nuts, &c. &c. Remember, moreover, that there are not merely three meals a day to each person, but often four and sometimes five; and occasionally, with the children, even more than this. Allowing to each individual four meals only, including the luncheons, and the whole number of meals, taken in a day, would be twenty. Now 33 pounds of food a day, would be only about a pound and a half of food to each meal. What child, of any size, will not eat his pint of milk, if not his half a pound of bread, at each meal? But what father of a family who labors hard would be satisfied, except from sheer necessity, with anything like a pound and a half of the most solid food which could be presented, unless it were cheese or bacon, and these are usually eaten as condiments, rather than as principal articles.

What farmer is there, for example, who is really hungry, at noon, and sits down to a platter of boiled beef, pork, potatoes, turnips and carrots, accompanied by brown bread, rye bread, or wheat bread, and followed by boiled Indian pudding, with cream, butter and molasses, and a little cheese, who does not eat eight ounces of meat, a pound of potatoes, a pound of turnips or carrots, a pound of pudding, and half a pound of the other accompaniments; to say nothing of bread—of which it would take but a few such mouthfuls as farmers bolt down, to make up half a pound. Now here are four pounds of food eaten at a single meal, leaving out the bread; and no one who ate this would suspect himself of excess, as the custom is. But this repeated three times a day, would be twelve pounds. If the mistress of the family and the children should, upon the average, use but half as much, each, the amount a day would considerably exceed thirty-three pounds.

Again, at supper, suppose the master of a family eats four ounces of flesh meat, one pound of potatoes, a pound of bread or bread and hasty pudding, four ounces of cheese and butter, a pound and a half of milk, and half a pound of some sort of pie—and I can assure my readers, and your correspondent in particular, that such suppers are not uncommon—this would be four pounds and a half. I think that breakfasts, including, as they often do, a pound or so of solid mince pie, and a pound or two of "hash," would fall a little short of the dinner or the supper, in point of weight or quantity; but then we must not forget the luncheons, the apples and the nuts; nor the milk drank from time to time during the day.

I say again, therefore, that startling as the conclusion may be, that many of our "full" agricultural families of five persons consume 33 pounds of food a day, and the male adult laborers at least 10 or 12, I am confident facts will sustain it. However, to prevent any possibility

of exaggeration, let us reduce the quantity one fourth. This still leaves to an adult laborer 9 pounds of food a day. Is not this, on the most liberal allowance, four times as much a day as should be eaten?

Will it still be said, despite of all this, that there is no excess in the community? that "the appetite is a safe" and "competent guide?" that there is no danger of erring either "in the quantity or the quality" of food? that our people "give themselves up to the impulses and checks of nature, and are not betrayed?" &c.

But I will pause here; for I hope to have a further hearing, and therefore ought not to be tedious. There are several topics which, for humanity's sake—not solely for my own sake—ought to be discussed; and for which I know of no place (beyond the limits of my own periodical, the "Library of Health") more appropriate than your Journal. "The best part of the medical art is the art of avoiding pain," was the motto of Dr. Coffin, your predecessor, in his Medical Intelligencer; and who will say that to prevent the consumption of four times as much food as is necessary, would not be to follow out the spirit of the doctor's motto, and to fulfil a most praiseworthy end of the medical profession?

Dedham, Dec., 1839.

Yours, &c.

WM. A. ALCOTT.

SMALLPOX.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

DEAR SIR,—Thirty-eight years ago I was inoculated for cowpox from matter obtained from Dr. Waterhouse. Thirty-four years since, an inhabitant of Northboro', county of Worcester, returned from New York indisposed, and shortly afterwards came out with smallpox. At that time vaccination was not much practised, and as his own family and others in the district were exposed to the disease, the authorities ordered an inoculation for smallpox of all who had been and were exposed. To test the preventive power of cowpox, I visited this little hospital, and took with me two others whom I had previously vaccinated at different times; and we procured ourselves to be inoculated by the attending physician from the body of the man who died a few days afterwards of confluent smallpox. The punctures in our several arms inflamed slightly in about twenty-four hours, and in five or six days subsequently terminated in an irregular scab, which fell off, leaving no mark. Since then I have treated the disease as it prevails now at many different times, and am familiar with its appearance in the unprotected, in those who have had cowpox, and in those who have had natural smallpox, and smallpox by inoculation.

How cowpox should be a preventive of smallpox in any instance, or why smallpox should be modified by cowpox, I do not pretend to know. But it is strange that smallpox—the most cruel, loathsome and deadly of all diseases derived from specific infection—is not a security against a second attack of the same disease. It is a singular departure from the laws that uniformly govern other diseases which are propagated, we know, by specific infection. Measles may be confounded with other

exanthematæ which simulate it; mumps with incidental inflammation of the parotid glands; hooping cough with bronchitis; chickenpox with mild or mitigated smallpox; and the strong resemblance between the latter induced Thompson, in his treatise on smallpox, &c., to affiliate smallpox, varioloid and *chickenpox*. But these mistakes, to an experienced eye, will so seldom happen as to furnish scarcely an exception.

My own opinion is that smallpox, *as it exists now*, is as distinct from the "regular smallpox" described by Sydenham and the earlier writers, as is chickenpox from varioloid; that the smallpox of the present time is described by Sydenham under the name of "anomalous smallpox." A history of the same disease was written by Rogers (if I mistake not), as it prevailed in some part of Ireland, and again by some one (name not recollected) in India. "Regular smallpox," as described by Sydenham, was a pustular disease, accompanied with phlegmonous inflammation. I suppose cowpox to be a certain preventive of this disease; and since the almost universal introduction of cowpox, that pustular smallpox is among "the things that were"—that it does not, in fact, exist at this time.

The smallpox of this day is a vesicular disease, and the accompanying inflammation is erysipelatous—a distinct disease, and requiring medication and management quite different from the approved method of treating "pustular smallpox." If this hypothesis be correct, it does away entirely many perplexing doubts and embarrassments. And these suggestions, I hope, will induce others of more leisure and better means to re-examine the earlier authorities, comparing their descriptions and histories with what is passing now under our own eyes.

Springfield, Dec. 30, 1839. Respectfully, your obt. servt.

JOSEPH H. FLINT.

P. S.—I need not mention that I have written hastily, and from recollection, in my references. I had prepared a paper on this subject some years ago, with more care; and though I cannot charge my dog "Diamond" with misconduct, the paper, by accident, got into the fire. I fear you will think it gave more light in that way than it would in any other. If you can make use of the above, it is at your service. And if you will pardon my troubling you with *hasty sketches*, I will feel much obliged.

J. H. F.

SPINAL IRRITATION.

To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

SIR,—It would be gratifying to see the disease denominated spinal irritation, discussed in your Journal. It is one becoming very common in this region, and I believe more or less prevalent over the country at the present day. It has fallen to my lot to see much of it for the last five years. I have at the present time no less than eight cases on hand, some of which are severe. I have been much perplexed with this disease, finding some of my patients hard to cure. The patients that

have fallen into my hands have generally been females, and those that have borne one or more children, although not unfrequently I have witnessed it in men.

Hoping that some of your able correspondents, who have had experience in this disease, will take it up, and discuss it at large, I leave it for the present, by propounding the following question. What is the nature, the principal causes, and best mode of treatment, of spinal irritations?

Respectfully yours,

West Amesbury, Dec. 25th, 1839.

BENJ. ATKINSON, M.D.

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BOSTON, JANUARY 8, 1840.

DR. DUNGLISON'S INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

It is absolutely amazing how much a person may accomplish by an economical arrangement of time. It seems but a few years since we saw the name of Dr. Dunglison in the catalogue of professors attached to Mr. Jefferson's University, as it was then called—who selected, in Europe, such persons as were esteemed the best qualified to sustain the school of learning to which the last days of that great man were devoted. Next, the Professor was taking a prominent lead in the medical department of the University of Maryland—and next, meteor like, the position which he sustains in the Jefferson Medical School, at Philadelphia, equally rounds to his honor and a wide-spreading reputation. All the while, book upon book has been ushered into being, with such rapidity that it would seem that no other business could have been conducted with order or satisfaction, while these were on the tapis. Such are a few of our own recollections of the course of the author of an introductory discourse, delivered before the medical class, at the opening of the lecture session, in November, at the Jefferson Medical College.

This address seems not to have been written with a view to publication—but merely as an opening process, by which he introduced himself, officially, to the students. They, however, felt that its claim was higher than did the author, and in a spirit of unanimity, creditable to the discretion of the class, requested permission to put it to press. Some parts of the lecture are really beautiful; others excite our risibility—and then comes in, appropriately, the solemn lessons which are to exercise the mind of the practitioner through life.

"I have mentioned that the result of your professional studies, and I may add, ultimate success, will depend greatly on your own exertions. The remark that every man of eminence in science is self-made, is indisputably just. Natural endowments may communicate a facility of conception and execution; yet commanding distinction is only to be attained by well-directed, sustained, and strenuous efforts. The feeling prevalent amongst the vulgar, that a knowledge of medicine comes by nature, is passing away—strange that it should ever have existed—and it is now almost universally conceded, that nothing but a sedulous cultivation of the powers of observation and reflection can render an individual familiar

with the intricate mechanism of man in health and in disease; in short, with that which has been properly regarded and described as 'the most inductive of all sciences.'

Here is a specimen of the doctor's tact for relating a good anecdote.

"The story related by Dr. Moore, of the French student of medicine, which is the prototype of many similar anecdotes, is not an overdrawn picture of the mode in which experience must have been registered in days of yore, and, I fear, is not wholly without its application in the present day. 'A French student of medicine lodged in the same house, in London, with a man in fever. This poor man was continually teased by the nurse to drink, though he nauseated the insipid liquids that were presented to him. At last, when she was more importunate than usual, he whispered in her ear—'for God's sake bring me a salt herring, and I will drink as much as you please.' The woman indulged him in his request; he devoured the herring, drank plentifully, underwent a copious perspiration, and recovered. The French student inserted this aphorism in his journal: '*A salt herring cures an Englishman in his fever.*' On his return to France, he prescribed the same remedy to the first patient in fever to whom he was called. The patient died; on which the student inserted in his journal the following caveat: '*N. B. Though a salt herring cures an Englishman, it kills a Frenchman.*'"

There is good sense in the following paragraph.

"Yet, gentlemen, although we are amazingly improved in our habits of noting and registering facts, I am not sure if the more modern methods of observing are not calculated, with all their advantages, to be productive of some evil. The school of Louis, to which we owe many excellent monographs on individual diseases, urgently impressing, as it does, upon the tyro, the necessity for the most careful observation of the phenomena presented by disease, is apt to leave the impression that this is all the practitioner needs, and to convey the too exclusive idea, that self-observation is alone necessary to make the accomplished pathologist and physician—an ideal rock on which the profession has struck for ages, and which has greatly retarded the onward course of medical science."

Should opportunity present, further drafts will be made upon the pages of this address, which shows that the author is always at home, in all occupations and locations.

Crania Americana.—We have felt so much interest in the work of Dr. Samuel G. Morton, of Philadelphia, bearing the above title, that no reasonable opportunity has been allowed to pass by, without reminding those who acquaint themselves with the progress of science, that they should encourage the author in every possible manner in their power. Within a few days, several hundred copies have been sent out, in a state of completion, fully equalling the expectations of Dr. Morton's friends. One hundred copies were shipped to London as soon as they were taken from the binders. Only three hundred more, says a correspondent, were published—a part of which were placed on board the brig Palmer, destined for this port; but unfortunately for the owners, and particularly so for subscribers at the north, the vessel was wrecked on the passage, and every volume of this splendid production of Dr. Morton's best years, was sunk in the ocean. Mr. Combe, with whom we were conversing on the subject of the author's researches, spoke of the undertaking in terms of admiration. He seemed

to consider that it was one of the most important which had emanated from the American press. It is beginning to be an inquiry—whether there is any mode of supplying the reading community with another set of books. The price originally fixed upon was twenty dollars. When the numerous and difficult plates are carefully examined, no one will presume to assert that it is a dear book: on the contrary, it is so reasonable that every library, making pretensions to character, in the whole country, should endeavor to obtain it.

Medical Examiner.—The third volume of this Journal, published in Philadelphia, commenced on the 1st inst. During the past year its reputation and worth have continued to increase. It has in the editorial chair some of the ablest and most energetic of the scientific youth of Philadelphia. During the past year it has published several letters from correspondents in Europe, whereby we have been brought in almost immediate contact with the men of the old world. Many curious and useful articles have appeared in it from the pens of Drs. Gibson, Gerhard, Pen-nock, Stewardson, &c. We recommend it to our readers. Dr. H. I. Bowditch, of this city, is the agent for Massachusetts. Terms, \$5.00 per annum, in advance. Published weekly.

Apparatus for the restoration of Club-feet.—A correspondent assures us that Dr. J. B. Brown, Director of the Orthopedic Infirmary, in this city, has operated upon five club-feet during the past week. Many of our senior surgeons and physicians were present, and speak highly of the skill of the operator and of the beauty of his apparatus, which is extremely ingenious and complicated. It appears to fit easily upon the limb, and to produce little inconvenience. The pressure is graduated by turning a key, and may be varied in any direction and degree the case may require. It appears to be adapted to all varieties of the deformity, as the different parts are so constructed that a pressure may be produced in contrary directions at the same time, as the nature of the particular case may indicate. We understand that Dr. Brown has obtained, or is about to obtain, letters patent for his ingenious apparatus. His great success in these operations is undoubtedly to be attributed much less to his mode of dividing the tendons, than to his adaptation of apparatus in the subsequent treatment.

Ohio Lunatic Asylum.—The first annual report of this institution is before the public. Dr. Woodward, of Worcester, and the Superintendent, have done us a favor in sending copies to the Journal, and another week some extracts may be made to show the progress of humanity at the West. Dr. Aul, the Superintendent, is extensively known throughout the West for a vigorous intellect, and an unwearied devotion to the highest and most responsible duties of the practice of medicine. From the knowledge, therefore, which we have of the character of the author of the report, we shall read it with the more interest.

Petition respecting Vaccination.—The Provincial Medical Association, in England, have circulated, for signatures, a petition to Parliament, on the subject of inoculation and vaccination. They pray that smallpox inoculation may not be permitted by any one who is not duly qualified to practise physic and surgery—and with regard to vaccination they say, "that it appears to your petitioners to be the duty of the State to appoint regularly-educated vaccinators, with suitable salaries, in districts sufficiently nu-

merous to embrace the whole of the poor population of the country, and who shall offer gratuitous vaccination at stated periods to all within their bounds, keeping accurate registers of their proceedings, and communicating regularly with the national vaccine establishment; that under such a system, duly organized and vigilantly executed, your petitioners have the strongest reason for believing that smallpox would be effectually restrained, and soon become almost unknown."

REGISTER OF THE WEATHER,

Kept at the State Lunatic Hospital, Worcester, Ms. Lat. 42° 15' 49". Elevation 483 ft.

1859. Decemb.	THERM.			BAROMETER.			Wind, 3, P.M.	Weather, 2, P.M.	REGIS- THER.			Remarks.
	Therm. Sun	Therm. Air	Therm. Shade	Barom. Sun	Barom. Air	Barom. Shade			Therm. Sun	Therm. Air	Therm. Shade	
1 Sun.	33	40	36	29.63	29.60	29.58	NE	Cloudy				Light snow in the night.
2 Mon.	36	39	34	29.60	29.62	29.60	NE	Cloudy				
3 Tues.	34	34	34	29.58	29.50	29.50	NE	Snow				
4 Wed.	36	44	44	29.48	29.40	29.35	NW	Fair				Cleared off at 8 o'clock, A. M.
5 Thur.	40	53	49	29.46	29.45	29.49	NW	Fair				Light shower in the evening.
6 Frid.	41	51	50	29.50	29.51	29.50	N	Fair				Very pleasant day.
7 Satur.	36	44	43	29.50	29.47	29.47	N	Cloudy				Moderate rain.
8 Sun.	40	39	42	29.42	29.36	29.37	N	Rain				Foggy morning—severe rain.
9 Mon.	40	42	43	29.10	28.83	28.72	NE	Cloudy				Foggy day, great rain at night.—
10 Tues.	33	40	36	28.99	28.96	28.10	SW	Fair				[Barom. fell to 28.47.
11 Wed.	36	40	37	29.22	29.25	29.26	SW	Fair				Very pleasant day.
12 Thur.	35	36	36	29.00	28.74	28.75	NW	Fair				Snow and rain in the night.
13 Frid.	34	33	34	29.09	28.16	29.21	NW	Fair				High wind—snow squalls.
14 Satur.	36	36	35	29.46	29.47	29.46	NW	Fair				Indications of storm.
15 Sun.	38	31	33	29.10	28.74	28.55	NE	Snow				Great snow storm. Rain in even.
16 Mon.	38	38	38	28.70	28.96	28.92	NE	Snow				Snow storm continued 40 hours.
17 Tues.	34	26	22	29.30	29.23	29.25	NW	Fair				[16 inches snow fell.
18 Wed.	16	26	26	29.23	29.29	29.29	NW	Fair				
19 Thur.	6	16	16	29.31	29.35	29.35	NW	Fair				
20 Frid.	9	19	18	29.40	29.39	29.39	NW	Fair				
21 Satur.	16	27	24	29.49	29.46	29.45	NW	Fair				Very pleasant day.
22 Sun.	13	24	23	29.50	29.40	29.30	N	Fair				[High wind.
23 Mon.	24	26	26	29.07	29.08	29.13	NE	Snow				Storm commenced at 7, A. M.
24 Tues.	39	35	33	29.30	29.31	29.31	N	Cloudy				Light snow in the evening.
25 Wed.	33	30	29	29.35	29.40	29.40	NW	Fair				Very pleasant day.
26 Thur.	15	30	27	29.55	29.60	29.61	NW	Fair				
27 Frid.	22	29	27	29.67	29.63	29.56	NW	Cloudy				Snow storm commenced at 4 P.M.
28 Satur.	32	37	35	29.47	28.35	28.22	SE	Rain				Storm continues, rain, high wind.
29 Sun.	25	26	23	28.42	28.47	28.50	W	Fair				Snow squalls—high wind.
30 Mon.	10	14	12	28.90	28.97	29.09	NW	Fair				High wind.
31 Tues.	8	16	15	29.47	29.53	29.55	NW	Fair				

The month of December, particularly the last part of it, has been cold and stormy. An unusual quantity of snow has fallen, amounting to from two to three feet in this vicinity.—The storm of the 15th commenced at New Haven at 7 o'clock, Saturday evening; at Worcester at 1 o'clock, Sunday morning; at Boston at 4 o'clock; and at Portland at 6 o'clock.—Range of thermometer, during the month, from 6 to 53; barometer, from 28.22 to 29.67.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—An obituary notice of the late Dr. I. Smith has been crowded out this week.—We hardly think Medicus's charge of plagiarism sufficiently sustained to render advisable the publication of his communication. It would be no easy matter to give the characteristics of a disease which has been described by so many authors, as the one referred to, without using the expressions of some of them—though perhaps the better way would have been to mention the source, in this case, from which most of the paragraph was taken.

ERRATUM.—In Dr. Chadbourne's first case, page 289, for 14 years old, read 34 years.

DIED.—In Holliston, Ms., Charles Cutler, M.D., of New England Village, 25.
—In Somers, Ct., Dr. H. A. Hamilton, 43.

Whole number of deaths in Boston for the week ending Jan. 4, 29. Males, 14—females, 15.

Of consumption, 5—smallpox, 16—inflammation of the stomach, 1—dropsy on the brain, 1—scarlet fever, 2—insanity, 1—quinsy, 1—inflammation of the larynx, 1—typhoid fever, 1—apoplexy, 1—dys, 1—erysipelas, 1—debility, 1—throat distemper, 1—stillborn, 4.

VERMONT MEDICAL COLLEGE.

The next annual course of Lectures at this Institution, will commence on the second Thursday of March next, and continue thirteen weeks.

Chemistry and Materia Medica, by DAVID PALMER, M.D.
Theory and Practice of Medicine and Obstetrics, by HENRY H. CHILDS, M.D.
General and Special Anatomy and Physiology, by ROBERT WATTS, JR., M.D.
Principles and Practice of Surgery, by GILMAN KIMBALL, M.D.
Medical Jurisprudence, by HON. JACOB COLLAMER, A.M.
Pathological Anatomy, by ROBERT WATTS, JR., M.D.
Demonstrator of Anatomy, SAMUEL W. THAYER, JR., M.D.

Terms for the course, \$50.—Graduation, \$10.—For those who have attended two courses, but do not graduate, \$10. All the above expenses to be paid in advance, or secured by note, with a satisfactory endorser, to David Peirce, Esq., Treasurer of the Institution. Board may always be obtained in this village, on reasonable terms.

The new edifice, with large, convenient, and comfortable lecture rooms, will be in readiness for the reception of the class the next term.

By order of the Board of Trustees,
Woodstock, Vt., Jan. 3, 1840. J. S.—copM15 N. WILLIAMS, Secretary.

MEDICAL SCHOOL OF MAINE.

The Medical Lectures at Bowdoin College will commence on Monday, the 17th day of February, 1840, and continue three months.

Anatomy and Surgery, by JOSEPH EAST, M.D.
Theory and Practice of Physic, by JOHN DELANAYER, M.D.
Obstetrics, by EBERNEZER WELLS, M.D.
Chemistry and Materia Medica, by PARKER CLEVELAND, M.D.

The Library contains 3000 volumes, and is annually increasing.
Every person becoming a member of this institution, is required previously to present satisfactory evidence of possessing a good moral character.

The amount of fees for the Lectures is \$50, payable in advance.
Degrees are conferred at the close of the Lecture Term in May, and at the following Commencement of the College in September.
Brunswick, Me. Nov., 1839. F. CLEVELAND, Secretary.

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TREMONT-STREET MEDICAL SCHOOL.

The subscribers, at their private medical school in Tremont street, offer the following facilities to professional students.

A daily attendance at the Massachusetts General Hospital, and at the Eye and Ear Infirmary, with frequent opportunities of seeing cases, and surgical operations, in private practice, and in the public dispensaries. Arrangements have been made for affording obstetric practice to a considerable extent under the superintendence of the instructors.

A regular system of instruction by means of lectures and examinations in all the branches of the profession will be pursued throughout the year.

ANATOMY.—Recitations heard by Drs. Reynolds and Holmes. A course of lectures on Surgical Anatomy by Dr. Holmes. Demonstrations and Dissections.

OPHTHALMY.—A complete course of eighty lectures, including diseases of the Eye and Ear, by Dr. Reynolds.

CHEMISTRY.—Recitations and instructions by Dr. Storer.

PHYSIOLOGY AND PATHOLOGY.—Lectures and recitations by Dr. Holmes, including a special course on Auscultation and Percussion.

MIDWIFERY.—Lectures and recitations by Dr. Storer, with practical instruction on the application of obstetrical instruments upon the machine or model.

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MEDICINE, CLINICAL INSTRUCTION, AND MATERIA MEDICA, under the superintendence of Dr. Bigelow.

Boston, Nov. 30, 1839.

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JACOB BIGELOW,
EDWARD REYNOLDS,
D. HUMPHREYS STORER,
OLIVER W. HOLMES.

VACCINE VIRUS.

PHYSICIANS in any section of the United States can procure ten quills charged with PURE VACCINE VIRUS, by return mail, on addressing the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, enclosing one dollar, *post paid*, without which no letter will be taken from the post office. June 19

THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ALMANAC FOR 1840.

Is now published, and may be obtained at the Journal office. This volume is much larger than the first, and its contents will be found in every respect more complete and useful. Price—in pocket-book form, \$1; in cloth binding, 75 cents. Copies are done up in paper covers to be sent by mail, the price of which is 62 1-2 cents. The postage, for less than 100 miles, will be only 6 cents—over 100 miles, 10 cents. Dec. 11.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL is published every Wednesday, by D. CLAPP, JR., at 184 Washington St., corner of Franklin St., to whom all communications must be addressed, *post paid*. It is also published in Monthly Parts, with a printed cover. There are two volumes each year. J. V. C. SMITH, M.D., Editor. Price \$3.00 a year in advance, \$3.50 after three months, or \$4.00 if not paid within the year. Two copies to the same address, for \$5.00 a year, in advance. Orders from a distance must be accompanied by payment in advance or satisfactory reference. Postage the same as for a newspaper.